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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
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COMMENT ON HUNGARIAN AMNESTY DECREE

The Hungarian amnesty decree on 25 July and the order to abolish internment camps fulfill a promise made two weeks ago by Premier Nagy. The amnesty decree is similar to earlier ones issued in Rumania and Czechoslovakia but is not as generous as the Soviet decree issued in March. As in the case of Rumania, there is evidence that prisoners were actually being released in Hungary prior to the decree.

Under the Hungarian amnesty persons serving sentences not exceeding two years-as well as minors, expectant mothers, women over 50 and men over 60 irrespective of the terms of sentence - are granted full pardons. Sentences of those serving more than two years are reduced by one-third. The amnesty, however, will not affect the status of a vast number of prisoners. It does not apply to persons convicted of anti-state activity, treason, murder, robbery, rape, or to persons imprisoned for terms exceeding five years for crimes against public or private property.

The order abolishing internment camps represents a step which has not been emulated anywhere else in the Orbit. In fact Soviet-Satellite press comment on the recent governmental changes in Hungary has never mentioned the promise to abolish internment camps. The Hungarian decree instructs the Minister of Interior to terminate all police detentions and to abolish all internment camps by 31 October. It also cancels all prohibitions of residence and deportations imposed prior to the promulgation of the decree.

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